REFORMATION TODAY '76

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Bristol — 1977

Seventh Carey Conference 4th-7th January, 1977

NOTHING IN THE UNIVERSE CAN COMPARE WITH THE CHURCH FOR FAVOUR AND GRACE received. She is God's city, the Spirit's everlasting temple, Christ's bride and the Father's joyful family of sons and daughters. The churches on earth are as a fountain of gardens adorning the beautiful valleys of Lebanon, with wells of living water refreshing each one. As we come in close proximity to an individual church we see (or ought to see) the glories in a particular way rather than in a general fashion. Jerusalem viewed from the Mount of Olives has a panoramic splendour of her own. In contrast there is beauty of a different character as we focus on the lily of the valley arrayed in a glory which the splendour of Solomon's court could not match. The local church is a microcosm of the church universal. She is likened to a garden enclosed, a place of the most pleasant fruits and fragrant flowers—camphire, frankincense, myrrh and aloes.

The delights of the local church do not result by chance but come by the work of the Holy Spirit as he integrates a group of believers (Eph. 4:16) causing them to harmonise in worship and service. This involves details rather than generalities.

How vital is the worship in the local church? Is it just an intellectual acknowledgement of the need to give honour to the Creator or does it involve our total being? We call ourselves non-conformists but how much of our thinking and practice is inherited from the last century? Is baptism just a badge of discipleship or should it be a means of grace for the local church? Similarly with the Lord's Table, how important is it in the life of the church? Is fellowship just haphazard friendship or does spiritual communion have a vital role in the life of the church? These are some of the subjects to be handled at the forthcoming conference.

As at previous conferences the evening sessions will be devoted to preaching within the general theme of the conference but not bound by the subjects suggested. To give opportunity for those from surrounding areas to join in, these sessions they will be held (DV) at Buckingham Chapel, Clifton, Bristol at the kind invitation of the church there, where Ronald Clarke is the pastor.

The time of discussion will be on the place of music in our worship and a further session will be devoted to a time of prayer.

Badock Hall, in Stoke Park Road, is part of the University of Bristol to the North West of the town. The conference is intended primarily for those holding office in the churches. Others who are actively involved in the work of the church may apply but acceptance will depend upon available places. The conference will be limited to one hundred residents but there will be additional places available for day visitors.

Inflation has also affected costs for the conference but a subsidised rate will be available for those in full-time ministry. As in previous years it is hoped to give assistance to those travelling long distances. We hope no one will be prevented from coming for financial reasons and any with such problems should contact the conference secretary.

We would encourage churches to support their elders to attend the conference and those who are able to help meet the various costs to send contributions.

Booking

For application forms and further details write to John Rubens, 36 Longden Close, Northwood End, Haynes, Bedfordshire. Telephone: Haynes (STD 023 066) 440.

The conference assembles for tea at 4.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 4th January and concludes after breakfast on Friday, 7th January.

See back inside cover for the conference programme.

Front Cover. *Children like these at the Carey Family Conference at Pilgrim Hall this year are ready to go! Where leadership is provided how readily do the young respond! John Davison lays the foundation in this issue for two further articles on Reformation in the Sunday School.*

Editorial

Pharisaism, Romanism and Exclusivism

We are to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free (Gal. 5:1). The liberty referred to is a liberty of justification by faith alone and by grace alone which is entirely free from conditions. Our salvation is not dependent upon keeping to rules. The Holy Spirit gives to believers a joy in keeping the commandments of God. This they do because of love and gratitude. If other believers fail or fall short in their profession they are viewed not with censorious recrimination but rather with prayerful, loving and tender concern. Opportunity for correction is sought with meekness and gentleness. In contrast to the evangelical spirit of love and joy promoted by the Holy Spirit indwelling believers, is the spirit of the legalist, critical, censorious, fault-finding. It is the essence of a legalistic spirit to major on minors—'to pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and omit the weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy and faith'. The glorious work of conversion in a newcomer will be obscured to the legalist who is much more concerned about details of appearance and behaviour. A visiting preacher may preach very well revealing many excellent qualities but because he does not match up to others who have had more experience and better opportunities to learn, the negative will predominate in the mind of the legalist to obscure that for which he should praise God. Fastening on points to which he objects the legalist blinds himself to that which is truly encouraging. As we see in the interview article, the legalist will go to incredible lengths with regard to details of service so that the Exclusive's supper is almost as pedantic as the Romanist mass. Outward detail gradually crushes spiritual freedom to death.

The question to be asked is whether the legalist is a Christian. Certainly the Pharisees were not saved. They were reproved by Christ for resisting his patient and gentle efforts to gather them. They made themselves subjects of a double damnation (Matt. 23:35-38). The legalists of Roman Catholicism and other sacramental systems who go about seeking their own righteousness are not saved, for by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight (Rom. 3:20, 10:3). What about the Exclusive brethren? Are they saved people? A very big question mark must be placed alongside those who are possessed of a legalist spirit for such a spirit is directly contradictory to the evangelical spirit of a true believer. However, despite the dreadful errors and wicked deeds of the Exclusives, it would be unbalanced and unwise to be too harsh in our judgment. It is our duty to judge with discernment (1 Cor. 2:15).

The interview article reveals the alarming extremes to which believers can go if they lack the stabilising factor of Church history. No group of believers can afford to cut themselves off from all the rest and become a law to themselves. We may have what we regard as important distinctives—what we believe is right for this hour in doctrine, in evangelism, in worship, in practice, in good works, in experience, but if we start beating our fellow servants and take up aggressive attitudes towards them then we grieve the Holy Spirit and cause judgment to come upon us.

Let us be very clear about the fact that this interview article about the Exclusives, in which Dr. Paul Garrard answers John Davison's questions very candidly, is not included because of a superior attitude toward the Exclusives who are in disarray and diminishing, but with the earnest desire that we should all avoid the pitfalls into which they have fallen.

An Appeal to Exclusives

Dear brothers and sisters, many of you will be reading the article concerning the troubles with which you are familiar. Some of you have been left high and dry like the boats at Rye in the recent drought. We beseech you to seek out healthy evangelical churches where you can share fellowship and benefit from systematic, expository preaching which will be like green pastures and still waters for your souls. Bring yourselves and your children but leave behind that which is legalistic, divisive or which is likely to cause strife.

The following article has been extracted from a manual under preparation by Wayne Mack on the subject of marriage. Expositions on tape as well as information about the manual and how it can be usefully employed are obtainable by writing to Pastor Mack whose address is on the back cover of this magazine.

The Development of Unity in the Marriage Relationship

ONE PLUS ONE EQUALS ONE MAY NOT BE AN ACCURATE MATHEMATICAL concept, but it is an accurate description of God's intention for the marriage relationship. Scripture says, 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become *one flesh*' (Gen. 2:24).

Years of experience as a pastor and counsellor have convinced me that many marriages are far below the biblical norm. Even many Christians are not experiencing the oneness in their marriages that God says they should have. These marriages are not providing the satisfaction that they are intended to bring. Nor are they the testimony for Christ that they ought to be (Eph. 5:29-32).

Scripture says, 'In all labour there is profit' (Proverbs 14:23), and nowhere is this more true than in the marriage relationship. Good, God honouring marriages do not just happen. They are the result of dedicated, diligent, consistent prayer and work on the part of both husband and wife. In this article I call you to work. To work on the most important human relationship in your life. Time, effort, serious thought, painful examination and honest evaluation will be required. My hope and prayer is that our great God would use this material to promote greater oneness in your marriage so that you may experience greater happiness and that his goodness, power and glory may be more fully manifested.

Unity through understanding God's purpose for marriage

We now consider God's blueprint for marriage in Genesis 2:18-25 as well as the concepts of leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh.

As far as I know there is only one statement about marriage that God includes four times in the Bible. He makes it in Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:7, 8, and Ephesians 5:31. The statement is 'For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' God makes this same statement about marriage once in the Old Testament and three times in the New Testament.

Also to be noted is that he made it once before man fell into sin and three times after man fell into sin. It contains God's marital purpose for perfect man and for sinful man. This statement contains God's all-time blueprint for a good marriage.

A good blueprint is just as necessary for a good marriage as it is for a building project. Today, there are many unhappy, unfulfilling marriages not only among non-Christians but also among Christians. This unhappiness is caused to a large extent by the failure of people to pay attention to God's blueprint for marriage. What then is God's blueprint for marriage? What does God's kind of marriage involve?

1. *God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to leave their fathers and mothers.*

What does it mean to leave your parents? Well, it certainly does not mean that you abandon or utterly forsake them. Compare Exodus 21:17, Mark 7:9-13, 1 Timothy 5:8.

Nor does it mean that you must make a great geographical move. Living too close to parents at the beginning of a marriage may make it more difficult to leave, but it is possible to leave your father and mother and still live next door. Conversely, it is possible to live a thousand miles away from your parents and not leave them. In fact, you may not have left your parents even though they are dead.

To leave your parents means that your relationship to your parents must be radically changed.

1. It means that you establish an adult relationship with them.
2. It means that you must be more concerned about your partner's ideas, opinions and practices than your parents.
3. It means that you must not be slavishly dependent on your parents for affection, approval, assistance and counsel.
4. It means that you must eliminate any bad attitudes towards your parents, or you will be tied emotionally to them regardless of how far you move from them.
5. It means that you must stop trying to change your partner simply because your parents do not like him or her the way he or she is.
6. It means that you make the husband and wife relationship your priority human relationship. Yes, you should be concerned about being a good son/daughter—or mother/father—but you should be more concerned about being a good husband/wife than about being a good son/daughter or father/mother. Children do not need indulgent parents who continually neglect each other. They need parents who will demonstrate how to face and solve problems. They need parents who will show them how to be good husbands and wives; how to relate to other people. If you are parents, your goal should be to prepare your children to leave home, not to stay. Your life must not be wrapped around them or you

may make them emotional cripples. You should be preparing yourselves for the day when your children leave by cultivating common interests, by learning to do things together, and by deepening your friendship with each other. When your children have married, you must not try to run their lives. You must allow the young husband to be the head of his home, to make decisions for himself, to look to his wife, not you, as his primary responsibility and helper. You must encourage your daughter to depend upon her husband, not you, for guidance, help, companionship, and affection.

2. *God's blueprint for marriage directs husbands and wives to cleave to one another.*

In our day many young couples seem to marry with the thought that if their marriage does not work out they can always get a divorce.

1. When they marry they vow to be faithful until death, but under their breath, they add, 'unless our problems are too great.'
2. Indeed, some suggest that we should have to renew our marriage licence every year as we do our automobile licence. Others suggest that we forget about the trouble of having to get a marriage licence or going through a marriage ceremony.
3. For them, marriage is a matter of convenience, or chance, and may be very temporary. It all depends on how the cards fall out. But God says, 'No, that's not the way I planned it. I planned marriage to be a permanent relationship. I want the husband and wife to cleave to one another' (Mark 10:7-9).

Marriage then is not a matter of blind chance but deliberate choice. It is not merely a matter of convenience, but obedience. It is not a matter of how the cards fall out, but of how much you are willing and determined to work at it.

A good marriage is based more on commitment than feeling or physical attraction.

1. According to Malachi 2:14 and Proverbs 2:17, marriage is an irrevocable covenant or contract to which we are bound.
2. Therefore, when two people get married they promise that they will be faithful to each other regardless of what happens. The wife promises that she will be faithful even if the husband is afflicted with bulges, baldness, bunions, and bifocals! Even if he loses his health, his wealth, his job, his charm. Even if someone more exciting comes along. The husband promises to be faithful even if the wife loses her beauty and appeal. Even if she is not as neat and tidy or as submissive as he would like her to be. Even if she does not satisfy his sexual desires completely. Even if she spends money foolishly or is a terrible cook! Marriage means that a husband and wife enter into a relationship for which they accept full

responsibility and in which they commit themselves to each other regardless of what problems arise.

In many ways getting married is like becoming a Christian.

1. When a person becomes a Christian he leaves his former way of life, his self-righteousness, his own efforts to save himself and turns to Christ who died in the place and stead of sinners.
2. In this act of turning to Christ, he commits himself to Christ. The very essence of saving faith is a personal commitment to Christ in which a person promises to trust Christ faithfully and completely and to serve Christ faithfully and diligently regardless of how he feels or what problems arise. (Compare Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 16:31, Phil. 3:7, 8; 1 Thess. 1:9, 10).
3. Just so, God's kind of marriage involves a total and irrevocable commitment of two people to each other. God's kind of marriage involves cleaving to one another in sickness and health, poverty and wealth, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, good times and bad times, agreements and disagreements. God's kind of marriage means that people know that they must face problems, discuss them, seek God's help in them, resolve them rather than run from them, because there is no way out. They are committed to one another for life. They must cleave to one another today and tomorrow, and as long as they both shall live.

3. *God's blueprint for marriage involves becoming one flesh.*

At its most elementary level, this is referring to sexual relations or physical union.

1. Compare 1 Corinthians 6:16.
2. Within the bounds of marriage, sexual relations are holy, good and beautiful, but if they are entered into apart from the 'leaving and cleaving' they are ugly, degrading and sinful. (Compare Heb. 13:4.)

But becoming one flesh involves more than the marriage act.

1. Indeed, the marriage act is the symbol or culmination of a more complete oneness, of a total giving of yourself to another person. Consequently, if the more complete oneness is not a reality, sexual relations lose their meaning.
2. One definition of marriage that I like is—Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death. God's intention is that when two people get married they should share everything—their bodies, their possessions, their insights, their ideas, their abilities, their problems, their successes, their sufferings, their failures. A husband and wife are a team and whatever each of them does must be for the sake of the other person or at least it must not be to the detriment of the other person. Each must be as concerned about the other person's needs as he is about his own. (Eph. 5:28; Prov. 31:12, 27.) Husbands and wives are no more two, but one flesh. And this one flesh concept must manifest itself in practical, tangible, demonstrable ways. God does not intend it to be merely an abstract concept or idealistic theory,

but a concrete reality. Total intimacy and deep unity are part of God's blueprint for a good marriage.
3. Total intimacy and deep unity, however, do not mean total uniformity or sameness. My body is made up of many different parts. My hands do not do the work of my feet. My heart does not do the work of my liver. There is great diversity in my body and yet there is unity. The parts of my body look different and even act differently, but when normal, each part works for the benefit of the other parts, or at least one part does not deliberately try to hurt the other parts. Similarly, husbands and wives may be very different in some respects, but they must not allow their differences to hinder their unity because God's purpose in marriage is total unity.

But you know as well as I do that total oneness is not easily achieved.

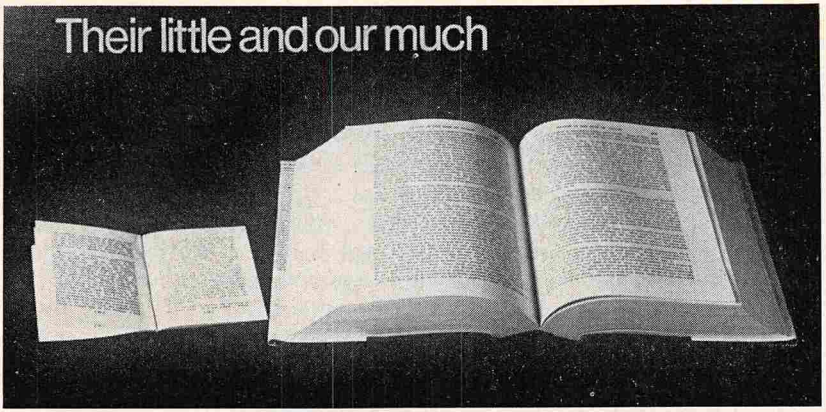
1. Certainly the basic hindrance to the achievement of oneness is our sinfulness. In Genesis 2:25, immediately after God spoke of the husband/wife becoming one flesh, the Scripture says, 'And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.' The nakedness of Adam and Eve is not a recommendation of public nudity. This happened before there were any other people around. Adam was the only human being who saw Eve naked and Eve was the only person who saw Adam naked!
2. And furthermore, this happened before they had sinned. After they sinned we read that 'the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.' As soon as sin entered the picture, they began to cover up. This attempt to cover up was certainly an evidence of their awareness of their sinfulness before God. Immediately and foolishly, they tried to hide their sin from God. Still further, this 'covering up' symbolized an attempt to hide from each other. When sin entered the picture, their openness, transparency and total oneness were destroyed.
3. Just as sin entered and hindered the oneness of Adam and Eve, so our sinfulness is still the great barrier to marital oneness today. Sometimes marital oneness is destroyed by the sin of selfishness. Sometimes it is marred by the sin of pride. Sometimes it is broken by the sin of bitterness, ingratitude, stubbornness, unwholesome speech, neglect, impatience, harshness or cruelty. It was sin that destroyed the total oneness of Adam and Eve and it is sin that destroys the oneness of husbands and wives today.
4. That brings us to our need of Jesus Christ.
First of all, we need Jesus Christ to bring us into a right relationship with God. (Compare Rom. 3:10-23; Isa. 59:2; Col. 1:21-23; Eph. 1:7, 2:13-21; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18.) But not only do we need Jesus Christ to bring us into a right relationship with God, we also need Jesus Christ to help us to be rightly related to each other. Jesus Christ came into the world to destroy the barriers that exist between man and man as well as between man and God. He breaks down the barriers that exist between man. He abolishes the enmity and makes men one in himself (Eph. 2:14-16;

Gal. 3:28). He alone can take a sinful selfish man and woman and enable them to leave father and mother, to cleave to one another, and to become one flesh.

If therefore you are going to experience the total oneness that God says is essential to a good marriage, you need to come to Jesus Christ. He breaks down barriers. He destroys middle walls that divide. He cleanses from sin. He breaks the power of reigning sin. He gives men the Holy Spirit who produces in them the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. He gives them the Holy Spirit who enables sinful men and women to leave father and mother, to cleave to one another and to become one flesh.

Holy Spirit Revival in the Sunday-schools
Why not again?

It was in 1789 that the Sunday Schools began to be systematically carried on. They were set on foot first in Wales by Mr. Charles and increased rapidly. The success of these schools, and the manner of conducting them will be seen by the following extracts from Mr. Charles's letters. 'Here at Bala we have had a very great, powerful, and glorious outpouring of the Spirit . . . *especially on the children and young people.* . . . Children that were afore time like jewels buried in rubbish, now appear with divine lustre and transcendent beauty. Little children from six to twelve years of age, are affected, astonished, and overpowered. Their young minds day and night, are filled with nothing but soul-concerns. The Lord hath done great things for us, and to him be the praise.' May, 1792—'That it was the work of God I am not left in doubt in the last degree. It carries along with it every scriptural satisfactory evidence; such as *deep conviction of sin,* of righteousness, and judgment—great reformation of manners—great delight in the word of God and prayer. These, *even in young persons,* occupy the place and employ the time that was spent in diversions and amusements.' 'Thousands of young people all over the country, have at this time their attention engaged upon divine things. . . . Boys and girls, from eight to sixteen, learn whole books of the Scriptures, and repeat what time permits us to hear; such as the whole epistle to the Ephesians, Hebrews etc. Others learn selected chapters, to an astonishing number; such as ten, twenty, thirty, etc. One little girl learnt seventy-two psalms and chapters; another, the astonishing number of ninety-two; the list of which I have in my possession.' In these Sunday schools, which were largely instrumental in the great religious awakening of this period, the children were instructed in the following truths—'The being of God—the doctrine of the Trinity—the inspiration of the Scriptures—the Person of Christ as God-man—the Person, titles and work of the Spirit—the corruption and renewal of the powers of man's soul—the necessity, nature and effects of regeneration—the privileges of believers—justification—redemption, that is, the necessity of it—the names given in Scripture to heaven and hell, with the names of the two roads which lead to these two places—the names given to Christ—the sin of sloth and idleness, etc.' 'In my opinion,' writes Mr. Charles, 'in the education of children, it is of the utmost importance, *in the first place,* to impress their minds with a knowledge that they are candidates for another world, and that things pertaining to their eternal felicity there, are of infinitely greater importance to them, that the little concerns which belong to our short existence here. The neglect of this is, I apprehend, a very great defect in the education of children.'



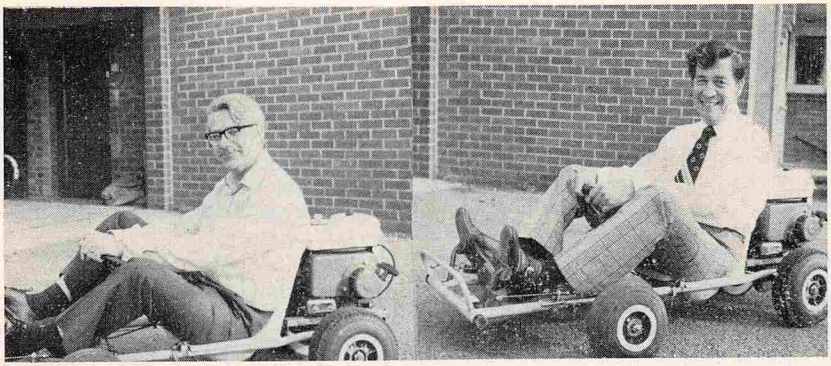
Their Little and Our Much

THE WORK OF A CONSCIENTIOUS MINISTER of the Word of God is never an easy one. It is relatively easy for a man accustomed to public speaking to stand in front of a congregation every Sunday and to fill in the time allotted to him for his 'address'. But no faithful preacher of the Gospel is content to go into the pulpit unless much time has been given to prayer and study during the previous week. Commentaries will have been consulted and he will also have been influenced by the books and magazines which he has read on a variety of subjects ranging from biographies to church history and biblical archeology.

For native pastors in most mission fields of the world, even today, such sermon study preparation is not possible. Very few helps are available to him in his own language. It is often argued that the Bible and the Spirit of God are enough for any preacher, but both have been in the world for very many years and we know that it is God's plan for every generation to pass on to the next the great truths which the Holy Spirit has been pleased to reveal to them through the Scriptures. It is also our missionary commission to ensure that these same truths are made known to all nations.

During my eighteen years as a missionary in France I have had ample opportunity to observe the paucity of sound Reformed books in the French language. The Lord was pleased to use our labours in the city of Marseille to establish two churches, one directly, the other indirectly. The second of these was founded earlier this year. When we began the work in the city in 1966 I personally drew up a confession of faith adapted to the needs of that time. Since then there has been growth and development and the new church felt that they needed guidance from some of the more historic confessions. Since there is no historic Baptist confession of faith available in French at the present time, they were obliged to turn to English. Fortunately some of the church leaders speak English so they are able to do a weekly study of the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, translating it as they go along. In many other churches this would not be possible and they would be left to their own devices, with all the potential dangers and doctrinal pitfalls which this would involve.

Because of our awareness of the needs of the French-speaking world for sound Christian literature, and confident that the Lord was leading us in



Prof. Edgar Andrews (left) and Bill Clark relax with go-carting between busy E.P. sessions. Others in the E.P. team are John Legge, Willis Metcalfe, Herbert Carson (chairman) and the editor. Not with carts but with lorries of relevant literature let us be going into Europe!

this direction, we began publishing books in 1963 under the name 'La Bannière de la Vérité'. The work began as a cooperative effort, with the Banner of Truth Trust providing financial subsidy and the European Missionary Fellowship providing manpower, storage and office space. This later evolved into an indigenous French organisation which was officially recognised by the French governmental authorities in 1966. The Banner of Truth Trust continued its subsidy until 1973 and the work broadened to include the Marseille church and other churches and organisations in France, U.K. and U.S.A., which actively support the work. At the moment the work is centred in Mulhouse where Pierre Nussbaumer looks after the distribution as well as being pastor of a small church. He also has a local bookshop. Although no longer resident in France, I continue to be responsible for the leadership of the French work in cooperation with Pierre Nussbaumer and the other members of the French committee.

This work in French has grown considerably over the years and the Lord's blessing has been on it. Books have been sold in over 30 countries and orders still come in every month from all over the world. We believe that French is one of the strategic languages for the African continent today. Apart from France and parts of Switzerland and Belgium, there are 21 countries in Africa (including Madagascar and Reunion Island) where French is an official language. Add to this Quebec, the French West Indies, and what was formerly French Indo-China (Viet-Nam, Cambodia etc.) and the strategic position of this language will become very clear.

In 1974 the newly constituted Board of Directors of Evangelical Press (which includes the editor of this magazine) felt burdened of the Lord, not only to develop the work in English, but to extend it to include missionary languages. At their invitation, and after seeking the Lord's guidance on the matter, we moved to England to assume leadership of the work. This was not an easy decision to make, but our burden for reaching the millions in the world who are not so privileged as we are in the realm of Christian literature, and our conviction that this was the Lord's leading, enabled us to make the move. The past two years have provided much confirmation that

this step was of the Lord. The team spirit within the Board of Directors and the active cooperation of all the members have been a real blessing and encouragement.

The declared aims of Evangelical Press are three-fold: (1) To publish sound Reformed literature for the English-speaking world. (2) To use all profits from the sale of books in English to subsidize publications in missionary languages. (3) To encourage churches to take a greater practical interest in missionary outreach through literature. To this end a Missionary Trust—Evangelical Press Missionary Trust (E.P.M.T.)—is being set up. All gifts received by the Trust, whether they be profits from the sale of Evangelical Press books in English or direct contributions from churches or individuals, will be used exclusively to subsidise Reformed books in missionary languages.

Over the past two years the missionary outreach of Evangelical Press has been slowly developing, and continues to do so.

French: Although there is no official link between Evangelical Press and La Bannière de la Vérité in France, there are very strong bonds of fellowship. It has been the privilege of Evangelical Press to subsidise the French work to a small degree and both organisations have the same general director. Sixteen titles have been published in French, including translations of *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* by J. Packer, *The Bible Tells Us So* by R. B. Kuiper, *A Divine Cordial* by Thomas Watson, *Right With God* by J. Blanchard etc. There are also some books which have been written by French authors and which are therefore not translations. For some of these books there has been such good demand that they have gone into three editions. At the moment several new books are being prepared for publication. These include Volume III of *The Child's Story Bible* (New Testament) by C. Vos (the first two volumes, which contain the Old Testament, are already in print), *Now that I am a Christian* by E. Kevan, *The Momentous Event* by W. J. Grier, *God's Way of Holiness* by H. Bonar and another book which is being written by Guy Appéré, pastor of the Geneva Baptist Church. Other titles are under consideration, including *The Greatest Fight in the World* by C. H. Spurgeon and *Survey of the Bible* by W. Hendriksen.

Italian: In Italy the situation is different. Here we have officially opened a branch of Evangelical Press. With the help of two E.M.F. workers, Franco Maggiotto and Pietro Lorefice, we published our first book in Italian a few months ago: *Per Un Dialogo Con Dio*. This is a translation directly from French of Guy Appéré's book *Pour Un Dialogue Avec Dieu*, which was published in French by La Bannière de la Vérité. Here we have the direct result of close cooperation in missionary languages. Translations do not always have to be from English! Other books are being prepared in Italian. These include, *The Sovereignty of God* by Pink, *A Divine Cordial* by Thomas Watson, *Today's Gospel—authentic or synthetic* by W. Chantry. *The Bible Tells Us So* by R. B. Kuiper. We also hope to translate and publish Hendriksen's *Commentary on John* in Italian, although this will take some time to prepare. The present arrangement is that the manuscripts will be prepared by Franco Maggiotto and books will be distributed by Pietro Lorefice.

Hausa: At the moment one of the books published by La Bannière de la Vérité in French is being translated into Hausa for the Hausa-speaking people of Nigeria and surrounding areas. This is a book which was specially written in French for African readers: *Connaitre Dieu pour mieux Le servir* by Ch.-D. Maire. This will be another direct translation from French, for the book in question does not exist in English. We hope that it will eventually be possible for us to translate it into English for English-speaking African readers.

Portuguese: In recent months we have received several requests to begin publishing in Portuguese. At first our reaction was one of caution, not desiring to take on too much at once. After giving this careful consideration, and in view of the pressing needs of the Portuguese-speaking countries of the world, we have decided to look into the possibilities of publishing in this language. We are aware of the current unrest in Portugal's ex-colonies in Africa, Mozambique and Angola, not to mention Portugal itself. Then there is Brazil, which is one of the fastest developing countries in the third world. Although traditionally Catholic, there is now a very real interest in the teaching of the Word of God. At the moment the country is being flooded with literature of almost all the false sects known in the western world, but little or nothing is being done to provide the people with sound Reformed books. We hope to be able to contribute to meeting this need.

All the above missionary activities will be subsidised through Evangelical Press Missionary Trust. We are conscious, however, that we are only scratching the surface, and pray that the Lord will raise up many others to join us in this task.

But in all this we have not forgotten the English readers of the world. Several new books are being prepared at the moment. *God's Outlaw* (the story of William Tyndale) by Brian Edwards will be ready in November. The first edition of Brian Edwards' book, *Through Many Dangers* (the story of John Newton) has been completely sold, but a second edition will be ready in January. A modern biography of Asahel Nettleton is almost ready for going to the printer. John Thornbury has been working on this for over two years. It will be the result of much original research and will contain hitherto unpublished material. This should be available around next February. We are also planning to publish a doctrinal book by Donald MacLeod and a British edition of *Survey of the Bible* by W. Hendriksen. Smaller books will include, *Christian Parents and Pop Culture* by J. Van Zyl, *A Wordbook for the Family* prepared by the Alethean Trust, and a book on the Creation issue by Prof. E. H. Andrews. Look out for these books and write for a free catalogue of the 150 books published or distributed by Evangelical Press.

Above all, we would value prayer that the Lord's blessing will be on the work to which he has called us. When we speak about the Board of Directors we are speaking about a team, every member of which has his own particular gifts and responsibilities. We are not simply speaking about men who meet every three months and decide what has to be done. We all feel called to this work and we are all actively involved in it. We ask for your prayers. S. W. CLARK.

The Annual Conference of the British Evangelical Council is scheduled for 9th-10th November at Leeds. The theme: 'Evangelicals and Biblical Standards'. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is one of the speakers. For details write to Paul Fearon, 6 Ancaster Road, Leeds LS16 5HH.

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John Davison has laid the foundation for three articles and the editors have used this with some material of their own to cover the subject in a comprehensive way.

Reformation in the Sunday School (Part 1)

AS WE CONSIDER REFORMATION ACCORDING TO THE WORD IN THIS AREA A question might arise in some minds as to whether there is a Scriptural warrant for Sunday Schools. Is there? Let us deal with this basic issue first.

The warrant for Sunday Schools

It is clearly evident that nowhere in Scripture is the term 'Sunday School' used. However, there is much about teaching children the truth of God. For example, in Deuteronomy 6:6-7 we read, 'these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children.' In the New Testament, fathers are exhorted (Eph. 6:4) 'provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' (See also Deut. 6:9; 31:12-13; Gen. 18:19; Ps. 78:1-8 and Isa. 38:19.)

It might be objected that such statements are directed mainly towards parents and that the instruction envisaged is that given in the context of the family of believers. But what of the children of unbelievers? Surely there can be no doubt that the great commission is in no way limited in its application merely to adults. To take the narrow view that a specific institution must be mentioned by name in Scripture before it is legitimate to endorse it is to completely miss the whole point and tenor of the evangelistic commission of the New Testament. It was because of the failure of the Jerusalem Church to fulfil the great commission that the Lord permitted a persecution which thrust forth the believers who were then recorded as 'being scattered abroad' and 'went everywhere preaching the Word'. No longer were they left in a restricted circle to indulge themselves in spiritual luxuries. The time for action had arrived. This was to go far and wide in the activity of proclaiming the Gospel. Their dispersion resulted in the preaching of the Gospel in unusual situations such as the market place at Athens and Tyrannus' school at Ephesus. We claim that Sunday School work is within the mandate to teach all nations. Given an audience, a place and a suitable time we will teach the Gospel to any group or race of people, young or old, men or women, educated or uneducated. If we can secure the attention of children we gladly do it, especially if the reception of the teaching is good. But this

does not mean we can afford to neglect other groups such as those who are in hospitals or old people's homes.

In a thought provoking, but inadequate, article published in the May 1976 issue of *Reformation South West*, M. J. Shelley suggested that 'it is more of a Communistic than a Christian ideal to take children from their parents and seek to influence them while they are young.' By the same reasoning we could say that indoctrination is the essence of the Communistic method to try and dominate the world and since we do not want to be like the Communists we should avoid indoctrination. But what M. J. Shelley really fails to observe is the voluntary principle. Whereas parents are obliged by law to send their children to school they are not under any obligation to send them to Sunday School.

If Mr. Shelley descended from his ivory tower and rubbed shoulders with slum families he would soon discover that many parents who have no Church connections do have a genuine concern for the right upbringing of their children. Very often they wish them to avoid the moral pitfalls into which they have fallen themselves. Some of them view the Sunday School as a very suitable means of achieving this. This is after all just what we aim at—the conformity of the child to Christ.

Of course it is not ideal that only some members of a family come regularly under the teaching of the Gospel. We cannot however cease in our endeavours to preach the Gospel to every creature because circumstances in society are adverse. It is far from ideal that a Christian wife has to attend services as and when she is permitted to do so because her husband is hostile to the Bible. It would be fatal to her interests if she gave up because circumstances were not perfect.

There is however much division of families today which is to be deplored, such as the separation of elderly people into institutions. But our calling is not to stay at home and complain about the situation. Rather we are to go out to people where they are congregated, or where they are willing to gather at our invitation, for the purpose of teaching them. It was far from ideal that Mrs. Gates, the founder of the Railway Mission in Brighton, should be a woman, and most improper, if not indecent, in the eyes of her critics that she should witness boldly to gangs of labourers in all weather and conditions, which was her custom. But God honoured her concern, zeal and action in an extraordinary way. Today the Railway Mission in Brighton is a well-grounded church of reformed and baptistic convictions which recognises this very principle we are asserting, namely, that we reach out to the people where they are and as they are (see Proverbs, chapter 8).

Another factor which we should not overlook is that there are differences between children and adults. It is not sinful to use these for good. On

the contrary it is wicked to ignore or neglect them. What are they? Partial innocence, impressionability, simplicity and time are some decided factors that distinguish children from adults. In respect of the paramount need for regeneration, all born of Adam, young and old, are identical, but in the way suggested there are decided differences.

By *innocence* we are not denying so much as a syllable of the Larger Catechism which spells out original sin in all its ramifications. Of course children are born of Adam's sin and have his nature. What we mean is that most children, and especially little children, have been kept back from the cesspits. They are mostly ignorant of vileness and therefore in many respects innocent. They are not sodden in the practices of iniquity. They do not yet know the existence of, still less have they travelled along, such roads as are described in Romans chapter one. What better than early conversion which circumvents the vileness of sin in this life and the pit of eternal hell in the next?

Children too are *impressionable*. There is nothing sinful or harmful about that. Rather it is a delightful characteristic and one referred to be our Lord in Matthew 18:1-7. To abuse that impressionability by leading children into evil is to incur the wrath of God in the most terrible way. In contrast to that extreme offence the Scriptures teach that it is a thing most desirable and very well pleasing to God that children should not only be the hearers of the Word but doers of it as well (Eccles. 12:1; Ps. 34:11; 148:12 also see refs. in first paragraph).

Simplicity. There has only ever been one perfect preacher and that was our Lord. A distinguishing mark of his ministry was that the most simple could understand and the most profound had the depths to plumb. The best preachers study clarity in order that the simple minded may be fed as well as the educated. The limited grasp as well as the restricted vocabulary of children make them a distinctive group. To illustrate this very practical consideration observe the complicated gradings in our schools. A preacher must aim to reach with maximum effectiveness his audience and if children form a high proportion of his congregation he is very foolish if he does not seek to edify them as well as the adults.

Time. One of the favourite excuses proffered by adults is that they are far too busy with this world's affairs to bother with church and religion. Of course that is a miserable excuse as Christians too have all their responsibilities to attend to, all within the sphere of their faith and under the supervision of the Lord whose yoke is not heavy. Yet excuses apart we must acknowledge that most adults are hard pressed to do justice to all their responsibilities whereas this is not the case with children. Certainly as they get older homework increases and exams take their toll of time. But in most areas there are multitudes of young children running

in the streets and especially so over week-ends. The scope for providing leadership and healthy occupation for these children seems infinite. Children, and especially young children, do possess much more of that valuable asset which we call time. This is an unquestionable factor. Whether the instruction be on Sunday or not is not the central issue. That we teach all who have ears and disposition to hear is the crucial matter.

In teaching the young let us not neglect senior citizens' Sunday evangelism (or if you like Sunday school for the aged). Some churches provide a weekly service in the old folks homes in their areas. In contrast to the young, the unconverted aged on the whole are not partially innocent but fearfully hardened by long lives of unbelief. The elderly for the most part are quite unimpressionable. Many have their consciences seared. Most have hearts that have become harder over the years until they are like granite. The elderly can become simple because of senility and in this respect there is the same need to be very clear and simple in preaching to them. Also the elderly have time, often a great deal of time, but hardness of heart so often predisposes them against the reception of the truth—much more so than with the young. Hence the stress of Ecclesiastes 12:1. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.

An objection to Sunday Schools is made by some Christian parents to the effect that it is the responsibility of parents to instruct their own children. To this it can be replied that instruction in the home is constant and that many advantages of a well-run Sunday School combine to form an ideal complement to that. The Scriptural principle of one sowing and another reaping is often observed when the son or daughter of a manse comes to confession through the instrumentality of a Bible class leader or Sunday school teacher and not through Dad's preaching. The principle of having the Scriptures applied by others is something we as adults relish greatly. While esteeming the regular ministry have we not sometimes gained great profit from visitors? While esteeming and honouring their parents many can testify that they have appreciated the opportunity of question time and discussion with Christians outside the family circle. As children from evangelical homes grow up they are in most cases confined very much to a small number of friends with whom they can associate in an intimate way. From pastoral and family experience and observing other churches, I am convinced that it is exceedingly unwise for Christian parents to restrict their children even more by forbidding their children join with the other children at Sunday School. It is true that in some instances the teaching may not be the best, but as we proceed in further articles with this subject we will see that much reformation can be applied. If we have enough confidence to be members of a local church then why despair of seeing wide-ranging improvements made in the Sunday School of our local church?

The Queen and Thorsen's Obnoxious Film

IT IS RARE FOR A CONSTITUTIONAL Monarch to express a personal opinion on a matter of controversy. Nevertheless Her Majesty has expressed her opinion that the plan to make a film in Britain about the purported sex life of Jesus Christ is 'obnoxious'. This very unusual action was prompted by one hundred and fifty letters which she received, some of them signed petitions, protesting about the plans of Jens-Jorgen Thorsen. Thorsen, a Dane, is determined to make a pornographic film with the title, 'The Many Faces of Jesus Christ.'

Before the Queen's statement hit the headlines, the Prime Minister, Mr. Callaghan, had declared his view to the effect that, 'this film would cause deep offence to the great majority of people in this country, among whom I number myself.'

The case is an interesting one and raises a number of questions for Christians. When we hear of such plans what ought we to do and how best can we resist such evil?

The facts of the case

The first thing that is needful is to check on whether the statements that are made are mere sensationalism, or whether the threat is a real one. In this instance it is true that Mr. Thorsen has been active since 1973 and it was reported in *Le Meilleur Journal* (Paris) 31st August, 1973, that when Mr. Thorsen announced his project he said: 'I am going to make a provocative film, which is blasphemous and harmful towards Christ.' Subsequently he attempted to proceed with his plans, but was blocked in France. Germany also refused permission. Likewise he received opposition in Italy. Molotov cocktails were thrown at the Danish Ambassador's residence in Rome in protest at the Danish government's subsidy for the film.

The press has reported that Mr. Thorsen declares that his film will be 'extremely obscene' (*Daily Telegraph*, 29th August, 1973). Reuters report that it is to include homosexual activities between Christ and the disciples, especially John. These activities are of the most depraved kind imaginable. Hetero-sexual activities involve Mary Magdalene and others.

It is quite clear from his reactions and statements that Mr. Thorsen is determined to proceed with his plans and that he has gone to great lengths to raise the necessary finance. Having been thwarted in other countries he intends to produce the film in the U.K.

What can Christians do?

In all civil and political matters it is wise for evangelicals to realise that their powers are very limited. We can be pessimistic when it comes to success in trying to hold back the floodwaters of evil. A sheep-farmer surrounded by hog-farms can protect his farm from invasion but he can do little to divert hog smells or change hog behaviour. Nevertheless it is the duty of Christians to try when opportunity is given to encourage civil rulers to fulfil their

God-given mandate to restrain evil (Rom. 13:1-4).

The Thorsen affair should be read within the context of the overall situation which is reflected among other things by the mass-media, especially television in which moral standards are very low. Occasionally there are excellent documentary films and helpful items. There is the news and there are sporting events. But even with these programmes we can no longer rely on clean viewing. Let me cite an example which is typical. On 22nd September, for the time allotted for sports-viewing the boxing match between Ali and Norton was advertised, together with the filming of the fourth Rugby Test match between South Africa and New Zealand. My son being a rugby enthusiast asked that we should watch the rugby which in the event was spoiled in as much these great athletes tarnished their fleeting glory by fighting each other as though involved in a war rather than a game. But the bitter regret was the fact that these extracts were preceded by a film showing Norton involved in sexual activities of the most repugnant kind. This illustrates that it is not possible even to watch a sporting programme without being unexpectedly confronted with obscenities.

There seems little limit, if any, as to what is shown or what filthy language is used. For instance recently a film was passed for viewing which includes appalling depravity to do with sex and Satanism (the title of the film is 'Rosemary's Baby'). Mrs. Mary Whitehouse has for several years drawn attention to the ugly situation. Something much more explosive is needed to deal with the unprincipled men in top places who are unworthy of their posts.

Arguments against the film

In writing to the Home Secretary, members of Parliament and those who may have influence and authority in such matters we should articulate clearly reasoned statements. For instance with Mr. Thorsen's film the plea is made that it should be allowed because of the need for artistic freedom. We should expose this as sheer humbug. The motives for the film are not artistic but the lust for notoriety and commercial gain.

Well reasoned statements can be used to show that pornography is an evil which incites evil and violent acts. It is possible to produce documentation to prove these matters and cases should be cited such as the instance in this country, 15th January, 1966, when a sackful of pornographic magazines was found near a water-filled ditch containing the bodies of two strangled girls, aged five and six.

We can point out that it is a crime to slander people. It is slanderous for any person to be defamed as a pervert, let alone be taken and represented in a film as such. It would not be tolerated that Churchill be depicted as a homosexual or pervert. Why then should we tolerate that Christ should so be depicted?

Christianity will not collapse because of perversions or depravities but Christ did utter a very clear warning that it is possible to defile and destroy the weak. This warning is recorded in Matthew chapter eighteen and has regard to little ones. It is better for a millstone to be hanged about a person's neck than that he should offend little ones. In a sophisticated age like this we can expect exceptionally diabolical inventions, but again, it is our duty to resist these and urge those who have the power to prevent offences. 'Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!' (Matt. 18:7).

In our prayers we must remember the sovereign grace of God. It is possible for the worst blasphemers and opposers of Christianity to be converted as we see in the case of Saul of Tarsus.

However we must avoid unreality. While some wicked people are permitted to prosper (Ps. 73), others who persist in atrocities by which many are caused to stumble are suddenly cut off and that without remedy (Prov. 29:1; Ps. 68:1,2).

The Sinlessness of Christ

In some instances local newspapers accept, and even welcome, exposition on religious subjects. For instance the *Mid-Sussex Times* accepted and published material expounding on the issues underlying the Thorsen film. Current controversies can be turned from negative argument to positive explanation. Usually the person of Christ is not discussed or questioned. The issue of his character has suddenly been thrust to the fore and opportunities open up to explain who Christ really is and what he did. Was he capable of sin and did he ever sin? Is it too much to expect unbelievers to accept that he never committed a sin? What do the Scriptures teach?

To begin with he was born of a virgin and hence was without the taint of original sin. The angel said to Mary, 'that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God' (Luke 1:35). Christ was God from all eternity. In the incarnation his divine nature was made one with a sinless human nature. He was the second man to be sinless, but the difference between Adam and Christ is that whereas Adam was a created human, Christ was divinely human. Christ could not sin because it is impossible for God to sin. Though trial and temptation was pressed upon him his divine nature always supported and upheld his human nature. Thus John could say, 'and you know that he was manifested to take away our sin; *and in him is no sin*' (1 John 3:5, *italics ours*).

The purpose of God is stated clearly when Paul explains that God, 'hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor. 5:21). The message of the letter to the Hebrews is to show that one sacrifice has been made once and for all whereby repentant believers can obtain eternal salvation. This sacrifice was made by Christ our high priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26). The Greek words used are more expressive than the meaning conveyed by the translation above. *Holy* implies a perfect relationship with God. *Harmless* means free from every taint of evil. *Undefiled* means that no sin infected him or clung to him. *Separate from sinners* tells us that while among sinners at no point was he one of them.

All other priests had to make sacrifice for their own sins but this Christ never had to do (Heb. 9:26). He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). Whereas temptation finds a hold with us there was no handle in Christ for the tempter to use or to grasp hold of. In his sinlessness Christ could challenge his opponents and say, 'Which of you convinces me of sin?' (John 8:46). Christ could also say at the time of his great ordeal at Calvary, the devil is coming, 'and has nothing in me' (John 14:30).

In order to symbolise sinlessness the sacrificial lambs of the Old Testament were required to be without blemish. John the Baptist pointed to Christ and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29), and Peter said of him that he was a lamb without blemish and without spot, who did no sin and in whose mouth no guile was found (1 Pet. 1:19 and 2:22).

As far as the lowest burning hell is from the highest glory of heaven so far are Thorsen's obscenities removed from the One who was dead but is alive for evermore. Let us proclaim the good news that those who repent and believe in Christ as the Son of God will receive forgiveness of their sins and eternal life.

The writer of this article is David W. Clowney a young Presbyterian pastor ministering in Philadelphia, U.S.A. It is published through the goodwill of The Presbyterian Guardian *where it first appeared.*

Paul's Trip to the Third Heaven

IN THE LAST FEW DECADES AMERICANS AND EUROPEANS HAVE PLUNGED into a religious ferment unparalleled since Pentecost. The 'Jesus Movement' is by no means the only manifestation. Businessmen are shocked to come out of their offices and find their children dancing in the streets with shaved heads, robes and begging bowls, proselytising for a Zen sect, or chanting 'Hare Krishna'. Centres for transcendental meditation abound; theosophy and spiritualism are more popular than ever; witchcraft and Satanism are openly practised.

Ironically, in the Orient where many of the religions originate, young people are turning away from religion. They are tired of centuries of piety and poverty, and have begun to look to Western technology for answers to their countries' desperate social ills. But their Western contemporaries have been spiritually starved by a society that makes a god of its technology, and they have begun a desperate search for spiritual food.

Quest for religious experience

This search is above all a quest for personal religious experience. There is high interest in mysticism of all kinds. Doctrine and ethical absolutes are thought to be irrelevant, part of 'organised religion', and hindrances to true religious experience.

Most of us come from backgrounds where doctrinal soundness is highly prized. Unfortunately, it is sometimes the only thing we prize, and the orthodox person free of gross sins is assumed to be an excellent Christian. We must not be misled by modern youth's mistrust of doctrine into our own misjudgment of their longing for religious experience. However lopsided it may be, this is a very proper desire.

In fact, the whole point of God's dealing with us is that we should be his people and he would be our God. Our relationship to God is a love relationship, a marriage—definitely a matter of experience. If we do not *experience* fellowship with God in Christ, then we are not really Christians.

If Christian experience is so important, we need to attend to it much more closely than we usually do, both for our own sakes and for the sake of this experience-minded generation. We should not lack for words when

someone asks what we mean by claiming a 'personal relationship with Jesus Christ'. Can *you* explain what you mean by this?

We can profit greatly in this by a consideration of Paul's experience as recorded in 2 Corinthians 12. Not only does he recount an experience that would intrigue any mystic, but he tells us the importance such experiences had in his own Christian life. What he says is most instructive for anyone who desires to have daily fellowship with Christ.

Paul's strange experience

Paul records his 'trip to the third heaven' with great reluctance. For fourteen years he told no one about it. He reveals it now only because his apostolic authority is at stake among these Corinthians. False teachers had bragged of their visions, revelations and miraculous powers, discrediting Paul's ministry. To help deal with them Paul makes a full display of the miraculous signs and gifts by which the Lord had authenticated his service.

Still, Paul fears that someone may think he is bragging. So he tells of his 'trip' in the third person, almost as if it had not happened to him. Of course, Paul is talking about himself and this shows in verse 7 when he slips back into the first person. Paul's point is simply to show that he himself had not qualified for such a journey to Paradise; his only qualification was his being 'a man in Christ' (verse 2).

The nature of Paul's experience certainly justifies his guardedness. He says he was 'caught up into the third heaven, . . . into Paradise', where he 'heard unutterable utterances, that it is not permitted for a man to utter' (verses 3, 4). The place can be no other than heaven itself, the dwelling place of the Lord with his saints and angels. Surely none of Paul's readers nor his rivals could claim to have made such a trip.

But Paul did not simply go to heaven (as if that weren't enough!). He also 'heard unutterable utterances' that no man is permitted to speak. This whole experience is an unsurpassable instance of 'visions and revelations of (from) the Lord' (verse 1). And we must assume that what Paul heard was a direct revelation from God, perhaps spoken by the risen Lord Jesus Christ himself.

Why is this said to be 'unutterable'? Did he hear something so far beyond normal human experience that he cannot put it in human words? It is not that it was not *possible* for him to speak it, but that it was not permitted (the meaning of the phrase in Greek). The situation is like that of John on Patmos when he was told to 'seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down' (Rev. 10:4).

The revelations that Paul received were given by God to him personally. Perhaps they were to sustain him through his difficult ministry, or perhaps

as an apostle to the Gentiles he needed to know certain things. In any case, they were for him and he was not permitted to reveal them to others.

Not man-made, but God-given

What conclusions may we draw from this? In the first place, we should realise that the initiative for Paul's mystical experience was on God's part; Paul himself 'was caught up', and did not even know whether it was 'in the body' or not. He mentions no special meditations or preparations leading up to his experience. We don't even know what Paul was doing at the time—which is the point. Paul's 'trip' was not the product of any self-induced state of mind of the sort cultivated by Medieval mystics.

Neither is there anything to suggest that Paul's 'trip' was anything like what is meant by the word today. There was no transformation of the consciousness of the sort claimed by Hindu Yogins, or the psychedelic experience gained through L.S.D. In fact, what little Paul says indicates that the revelation was verbal and not some strange psychological state. Certainly there is no hint that Paul lost himself in the Godhead as certain of the mystics sought to do. Paul's experience was one of special closeness with God his Saviour, but it in no way eliminated the distinction between creature and Creator.

Though Paul's journey into Paradise is totally unlike results sought by present-day mystics of all sorts, this does not diminish at all the overwhelming character of Paul's vision. It is a totally astonishing thing that he underwent; he was caught up into heaven, into the presence of the Lord, and given a private revelation for his personal benefit. It surely represents a high point in Paul's fellowship with the Lord, something he would constantly treasure throughout his life.

Glorying in the Lord's presence

How easy it is for us to long for a similar experience! How often we might wish for just one word of the Lord for ourselves alone. And how we might envy Paul's closeness to the Lord, his actual foretaste of heaven! How amazing we must find it, then, that Paul concludes his account as he does. For he says it is not in experiences of this sort, in such spiritual 'highs', that he will boast. Rather, he will glory in his sufferings and weakness, 'that the power of Christ may rest upon me' (verse 9).

This is very strange. Is Paul a masochist? What sort of perversion would make a man prefer pain to a trip to heaven? Paul did not, as a matter of fact, enjoy his sufferings. When his trip to heaven was followed by the 'thorn in the flesh' (whatever kind of chronic suffering this may

have been), Paul begged the Lord three times to take it away. But God would not, and now Paul glories in the result!

No, the Lord told Paul, 'My grace is sufficient for you; for my strength is made perfect in weakness' (verse 9). Where Paul was weak, held back by his 'thorn', the Lord made his immediate presence clearly known both to Paul and to those who watched the apostle as Christ worked through him. In this closeness of his Lord, Paul would glory.

The central focus of Paul's fellowship with God was not his taste of heaven, but the presence of the Lord in his ministry on earth. It was a ministry accompanied by suffering, both the 'thorn' and all those buffetings described in Chapter 11. How different from the arrogant boastings of the spurious apostles Paul was combatting!

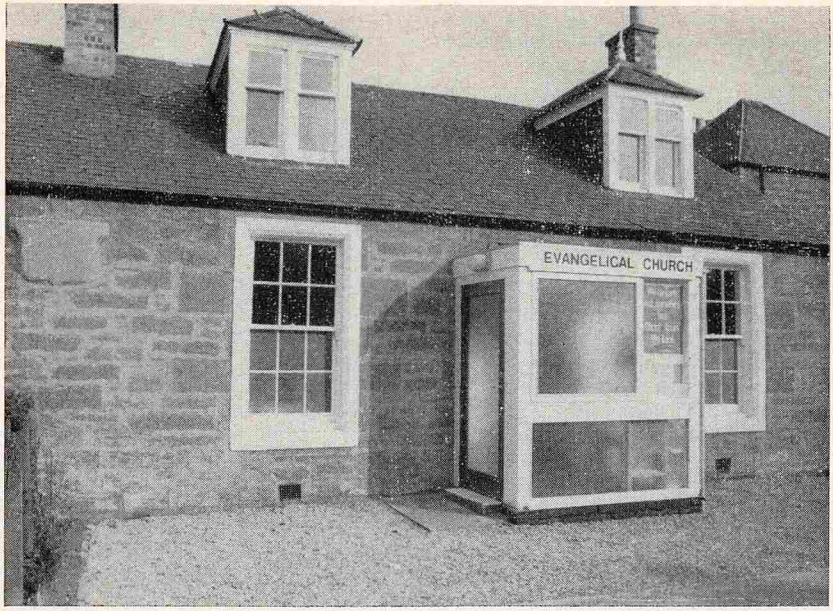
The experience Paul treasured most was his daily experience of the power of God working in him, the power that raised Christ from the dead, the power being made perfect in Paul's weakness. All those marvellous phrases—like 'Christ in you, the hope of glory', 'beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord', or 'being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another'—all these have reference, not to ecstatic experiences, nor to 'visions and revelations of the Lord', but to 'normal' Christian life in the fellowship and power of the Spirit.

Certainly the prophets and apostles sometimes had visions and ecstatic experiences. Certainly also the early church enjoyed the more spectacular charismatic gifts. But Paul in no way equates the abundance of such gifts at Corinth with spiritual maturity or depth of fellowship with God! In fact, it was precisely this error at Corinth that Paul sought to correct.

Genuine fellowship with God

To put it bluntly, fellowship with God does not consist first of all in visions, trances, mystical raptures, or ecstatic experiences. It consists rather in daily dependence on the grace of the Spirit as we pray, study the Word, and work with our Christian brothers in the tasks God has given us. Immersed in this obedience to our Lord, we will have the Spirit's testimony that we are the children of God, and our experience of genuine fellowship with God will be intimate and real.

Paul was quite serious, not wanting anyone to suppose that the content of his gospel of salvation by faith and life in the Spirit could somehow be bypassed through some ecstatic hotline to God. Such a bypass would be a delusion, and no true fellowship at all. To seek such ecstatic experiences is to waste our efforts when the way to fellowship with God is simple and available to all. Perhaps the reason why some Christians are so desirous of ecstatic experiences is because the way to fellowship is so simple and readily available; but that is what we should have expected, since God himself wants to have fellowship with *all* his people.



In number 31 the opening of the new building for the Perth Evangelical Church was reported under the heading 'The Wardrobe at Perth'. Not the wardrobe pulpit, but the building itself is shown above. John Davison and George Hillan are the elders of the church.

What Paul glories in is his sufferings. It is in them and his life of service that Paul, with all other Christians, knows 'the love of God that passeth understanding'. Within that context of suffering and of fellowship in service, Paul's rapture to the third heaven was a great treasure, literally a foretaste of heaven. Outside of that context, the experience would have no meaning at all.

Would we also experience the closeness to the Lord that Paul enjoyed? Then let us seek to be used by the Lord as Paul was. Ask the Lord to place opportunities to serve him that will stretch us far beyond anything we normally would be able to do. If we ask this with true readiness of heart, willing to lose our lives for Christ's sake, the result may well involve us in suffering and want. But as we give such service to the Lord, we will experience the power and blessing of God in ways we never knew before.

Though Christ was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. We also are weak in Christ, but we shall live with him by that same power of God. So, let us examine ourselves, to see if we are truly in the faith and so prove ourselves. After all, do we not know that Jesus Christ himself is in us? (*cf.* 2 Cor. 13:4,5).

Dr. Paul Garrard formerly of Sydney, Australia, but now living at Shillingford, Oxford, is interviewed by John Davison.

The Exclusive Brethren

Would you give us a brief outline of why the Exclusive Brethren, as they are called, take up the position they do?

The facts of the origins and history of the Brethren are fairly well known, and the account you gave previously[1] is pretty much the story as I know it. Firstly, I should say that I have quite an abhorrence for the term 'Exclusive' and if I use it in answering your questions it is mainly because I cannot find a more suitable or more descriptive word to use. Still less do I like the concept of using a leader's name as a kind of denominational tag, such as 'Darbyite' or 'Taylorite', although I daresay they may have some use for identification. Without splitting hairs or raising too many objections as to name, for my purpose these terms refer to that group of Brethren who took their origin from the movement which started in Dublin just before 1830 with J. N. Darby and others, and who subsequently followed the teachings of F. E. Raven, James Taylor and James Taylor, Jnr. These believers claim a type of distinctive spiritual succession in these four leaders, and describe their teachings as 'the four great ministries of the revival'. Other groups of Brethren would disclaim the title 'Exclusive', but would also not regard themselves as very good denominational associates of the Open or Christian Brethren. Included in this group I would put the Kelly-Lowe, or Elberfeld Brethren as they are known on the continent, and Glanton Brethren, who have recently joined forces after many years of pursuing separate pathways. It seems that as time has gone on, nearly all groups or sub-groups of Brethren who have abandoned Exclusivism have more or less gravitated to an Open position, except those who divided from the Taylorite régime after the Aberdeen split in 1970. These could still be regarded as exclusive since they tried to carry over with them what they regarded as the good features of what had gone before. However, it was not long after the Aberdeen débacle that there was further disagreement and splitting up into various camps. Overall the position today is that each group is trying to convince itself that it is right and all others wrong. Along with this goes an underlying strain of personal bitterness and animosity to each other which contradicts the profession they claim as the family of God.

Could you tell us about your own background?

My upbringing would be typical for a person of my age (I am in my mid-forties) who has spent his life in Brethren circles. Both my father and grandfather come originally from Yorkshire and belonged to one of the Brethren groups until the late 1890's when my father was about six years of age. In the course of some trouble, grandfather supported a brother over an issue and found himself 'out', so the family forthwith linked up with the Church of England and stayed there till 1909 when they went to Australia. At this point they decided to sever their links with the Anglicans, and looked up the Brethren in Sydney. Soon after this, some prominent and influential men who had gone with the 'Glanton' group on the division of 1908, came out to Australia, found this family of recent arrivals whom they had known previously, and persuaded them to throw in their lot with the Glanton Brethren. This they felt was the 'right' position.

My mother was brought up in lukewarm Presbyterianism, later linked with Baptists and spent some years as a missionary nursing sister in the Pacific Islands. She, too, later found her way amongst the Glanton Brethren, and then in my early childhood, both my parents joined the Exclusive group of which by that time James Taylor, Snr. was the well-recognised leader.

The reasons for this last move were interesting, because they felt that there was a tremendous dearth of spiritual life where they were and a lack of a solid expository teaching ministry. They were invited to hear some visiting ministers of the Word and encouraged to read some of J. Taylor's books. And so they were persuaded that this was the place to be. There is no doubt that for anybody who could accept what was (even then) an extreme separatist position, there was a tremendous wealth of expository teaching amongst Exclusive Brethren. In retrospect, I can see that their tightly controlled legalistic form of worship and practice suited my parents admirably, but it was not conducive to growth and maturity.

I must say however that I was taught to diligently read the Word of God and respect authority and inspiration, both by precept and example. Many times I used to come home from school and find my mother ironing with a leaf from an old tattered Scofield bible pinned up on the wall beside her, and she would say, 'Listen to this . . .' and she would share with me something she was enjoying.

Despite respect for the Word there developed the unfortunate overriding superior attitude that 'the Brethren are always right'. But as I grew older, and saw some of the terrible blunders that were committed, let alone the downright wickedness that was often perpetrated on godly people, I was more and more inclined to the view which I now hold that 'the Brethren are mostly wrong'.

With the passing of years one can see that individual conscience has been steadily overridden to impel believers to conform to a rigid code laid down by whoever happens to be the 'universal leader' of the day. The slightest deviation is made a 'test of fellowship' and the offender put out. Any idea of an individual standing up for some scriptural principle he has learned for himself is completely foreign to Exclusive thinking, and such words as 'independency', 'compromise' or 'tolerance' are anathema. One can be thankful for such clear scriptures as Romans 14:12: 'So then, *each* of us shall give an account of *himself* to *God*,' which puts responsibility squarely on each individual and should make us very hesitant to compel a belief or course of action on others against *their* consciences.

J. N. Darby was a decided Calvinist. Are his views on this subject still preached amongst Exclusives. If not, what is preached?

I think if you asked the average person in Exclusivism today what Calvinism was, particularly people of middle age or young people, they would look at you with amazement. They would look more blank if you asked them what Arminianism was. One of the clearest statements in J. N. Darby's writings occurs when he is writing comparing the doctrines of the Church of England at the time of the Reformation with some remarks made by the Regius Professor of Divinity in 1831, and I quote:

'I believe that predestination to life is the eternal purpose of God, by which, before the foundations of the world were laid, he firmly decreed, by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and destruction those whom he had chosen in Christ out of the human race, and to bring them through Christ, as vessels

made to honour, to eternal salvation. I believe, therefore that those who are endued with so excellent a gift of God, are called according to his purpose working in due time; that they obey the calling through grace; that they are freely justified; that they are adopted to be children of God; that they are made conformed to the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; that they do walk holily in good works; and that at length, through the mercy of God, they do attain to everlasting felicity.'[2]

Ostensibly, the 'gospel' as preached among Exclusives is aimed at leading men to the knowledge of salvation in Christ Jesus. Practically, how this is to come about is a mystery, for whilst such activities as outreach in street preachings has gone on in most places, 'outsiders' are now never invited to come under the sound of the Word in meeting-halls, and the notice boards which used to carry the 'All Welcome' message have been gone for some years. Right down the decades, though, there have been many able Exclusive evangelists. The number declined because of the numerous divisions of the late 1800's and early 1900's but even so there have been some outstanding preachers of the gospel since that time. Going back to the latter part of the last century, you hear stories of people like C. A. Coates who put everything they had into their message, so much so, that on one occasion (I was told this by my grandmother who heard him often) his starched cuffs flew off as he waved his arms around, much to his discomforture and the amusement of his congregation. C. A. Coates remained in Exclusivism all his life although his 'Outlines' of various books of the bible have had wide circulation outside. Also, many Christian people even today would have heard of the tract 'Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment' which has sold in millions and is still being circulated. This tract was written by George Cutting, a well-known Exclusive preacher. There are other names that come to mind, but just to finish, one of the most colourful figures of recent years, who died in 1968, was a man named F. J. Fletcher of Johannesburg, South Africa, who went on preaching till he was in his nineties. He was a fearless man who would preach anyhow, anywhere at anytime—trains, streets, airports! But these enthusiastic people with a love for souls and a love for Jesus Christ have mostly been pushed into the background and their gift left to wither and die.

And just another thing, whilst I am on this subject, there is a tragic failure amongst them (and I think this applies to certain other Christian groups too) of confronting their children with the necessity of the new birth, the reality of conversion, and the subsequent requirement of total dedication to the Lord and wholehearted faithfulness to his Word. As you know, 'household baptism' is practised, which is a variation of infant baptism, but the child is immersed and the ceremony is carried out at home. Also the baptismal formula used is Matthew 28:19 *plus* Acts 19:5 'to the name of the Lord Jesus'. The essence of this is really the parents making a dedication of the child, in faith, to the Lord. Children automatically partake of the Lord's Supper as soon as they are physically able to, and are regarded from infancy as 'in fellowship' with all the privileges and penalties which that involves. Mostly the young people are told that all will be well if they keep within the confines of the current edicts of the 'man of God' and that the 'Assembly is a sphere of salvation'.

The point is often raised as to the significance of the centrality of the Lord's Supper in all Brethren groups. Just how do Exclusives regard this?

You are asking me to comment on a very wide subject. The simplicity of the Lord's Supper was an important part of the early Brethren's activities and was in direct contrast to the ritualism and sacramentalism of the High Anglicans from whom most of the early Brethren came. It is true that Exclusive Brethren regard everything as leading up to and flowing out from the Supper, and will

tell you, if they are prepared to talk at all about their faith, that over the last seventy years there has probably been more change in the teachings and procedure of 'the Lord's Supper and the Service of God' than any other matter. It would be quite impossible to go into all the changes that have occurred even in my own lifetime, some of which could be described as new doctrinal views, others more procedural. As it is now, there is a fairly inflexible, albeit unwritten, procedure laid down which is carried out the world over. Very briefly, the service would go something like this: first of all, everyone sits in a circle, brothers in the front row, sisters in the back, and the numbers are kept down to under fifty if possible. The collection basket is on the table when you come in but the 'elements' or 'emblems' are only placed at the other end of the table by themselves after all are seated. There is only *one loaf* and *one cup* and these are put on the table by a sister. The meeting begins with the announcements, followed by an opening hymn to the Lord, after which some brother who feels 'led' gets up and offers the prayer of thanksgiving *to the Lord Jesus* for the 'loaf' (never referred to as the 'bread') after which it is broken and passed around, sisters first. The same brother gives thanks for the 'cup' (never referred to as the 'wine') and, after a brief pause, the offering is taken up. Thereafter a hymn is sung (they are only given out by the sisters) and there are roughly alternate thanksgivings and hymns to the end of the service. A hymn, but no thanksgiving, is always sung to the Holy Spirit. The latter part of the service is taken up with the worship of the Father, and, unless there has been some recent modification, worship to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Quite recently a new hymnbook was issued to Exclusives because it was found that since the last revision, a large proportion of the hymn-writers were no longer in fellowship! Such are *persona non grata* and however good the hymn it would not be acceptable for corporate worship.

What has just been described to you is very sketchy, I know, and I could go on for hours with the detail of how the present procedure has evolved through the years and the various modifications and variations that have been introduced. Most of what is known as 'the order of the Service of God' was developed during J. Taylor, Snr.'s time, but J. Taylor, Jnr. also made his contribution, and it was he, in fact, who suspended any word of formal ministry being given on the occasion for worship as well as introducing the 6 a.m. time for everybody to come together all over the world for the Supper. I was actually present at the meeting in Australia when this new starting time was brought up. Before that it had been 9 a.m. and before that 11 a.m. each Lord's Day. What happened was that J. Taylor 'our beloved', as he was known, was leaving on a Sunday afternoon or evening plane, and the faithful desparately wanted to hear him preach, which they could not do with the programme as it was. His alternative suggestion was that if they were so keen to hear him, they could start the Sunday programme earlier, namely 6 a.m. From then on, this 'new ministry' was written into the statute book world-wide. News-flashes by telephone as to the 'universal position' were sent round the world and this made its acceptance mandatory on every local church within a couple of weeks.

You used two expressions, 'universal position' and 'universal leader'. Could you please enlarge?

It sounds a bit Romish, doesn't it? Let me explain. I think there are two concepts which people outside Exclusivism would find it very difficult to grasp. The first one is 'absolute separation'. I must deal with this one before directly answering your question. The emphasis on this principle goes right back to J. N. Darby's time and I cannot do better than refer you to his classic exposition *Separation from Evil, God's Principle of Unity*.[3] The emphasis in that paper was particularly on separation—both physical and spiritual—from what Darby

regarded as ecclesiastical evil, and in his mind this eventually came to include every form of worship from Roman Catholicism to Dissent. He felt that when he left the Establishment, he came out to a 'position' to end all 'positions', but unfortunately his original intentions boomeranged and his successors in Exclusivism now find themselves in a position in Christendom which is an ever diminishing circle of not only separation but in fact isolation from everything else around. The scripture used to back up this concept is 2 Timothy 2:19-22, and the idea of 'departing from iniquity' is applied in the widest possible sense, to include not only heretical doctrine but also every 'vessel to dishonour' (v. 21)—by their definition, of course—and this scripture is called their 'Magna Carta'. As time has gone on, the definition of 'worldliness' and 'wickedness' has been extended and extended to cover every aspect of living, and once something has been defined as such by the 'man of God' of the day, it becomes absolutely binding on everyone throughout the world, and those who do not come into line can quite quickly find themselves 'out of fellowship'. The list of prohibitions is so long it would be impossible to give it now, but it includes such everyday things as no membership of any clubs, societies, medical or hospital benefit funds or trade-unions; no organised sport or entertainment of any kind; no university education; no eating or mixing with anybody not 'in fellowship', no women must take the 'pill', and no radios, record-players or TV sets are allowed. There are a few minimal concessions, for example, extensive whisky drinking is allowed to help people cope with the frustrations generated by their particular way of life! Newspapers are allowed provided you don't buy one on Sunday. Obviously exclusives are quite free to engage in commerce—because no system can even *survive*, let alone *thrive*, without money.

Exclusivism holds that all links or contacts of any kind with persons outside their circle constitute 'unclean associations', and a great deal of effort has been expended, particularly since 1959, in trying to make and keep 'the church', as they call it, 'pure for Christ'.

So this brings me to the answer of what is the 'universal position' and 'universal leader'. Looking backwards from the times of J. Taylor, Snr. to the early humble beginnings, I believe any such presumption to being a universal leader could not be further from the minds of those who actually led, until we come to the late 1950's. Even if you disagree with the early leaders on doctrinal grounds, you would have to admit they were outstandingly gifted persons of uprightness and moral integrity. Their influence was considerable but limited. J. Taylor, Snr who followed later, travelled extensively during a ministerial lifetime of over fifty years and this resulted in a general consolidation of Exclusive views, although there was a fair amount of resistance to change in many parts of the world. When you come to the period from 1959 on when J. Taylor, Jnr. firmly took the saddle (after a period of uncertainty and hesitation following his father's death in 1953) an entirely different set of circumstances arose. Mainly due to the advances in communications and travel, there was a gradual but definite tightening in control of the assemblies generally, and J. Taylor, Jnr. soon openly avowed that his was a ministry of 'enforcement' and 'compliance'. While it had been held for many years that each local church was responsible for administering its own affairs, the carrying out of instructions from New York soon extended to all parts of the globe, usually through 'local cabinet ministers', 'approved persons' or the 'local priesthood'. This same form of control right down to minute details is exercised to the present day through the 'universal leader', Jim Symington, of Neche, U.S.A.

Anybody who has even a vague acquaintance with totalitarian political systems of government will realise that a set-up like this has to work on the well-known principles of fear, terror, punishment, repetitive indoctrination and purges.

This is exactly what has been happening for years. The full extent of this rarely comes to the public view. It is claimed, naturally, that the purges are God's deliverance for his people to bring about a 'purer state'. And now so much purging has been done that even purgers have themselves been purged!

In a previous issue of 'Reformation Today',[4] Wayne Mack wrote an article entitled 'The Attraction of the Cults' which I think you have read. Would you class the Exclusive Brethren as a cult in the context of that article?

No I could not put any Brethren groups with people like Mormons, Christian Scientists and the like. Brethren generally have taken a very strong stand against the doctrines of such cults. But Wayne Mack did make some general observations which would apply to Exclusivism. After reading that article I read W. J. Schnell's book *Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave*[5], and was jolted to find I had seen many of the same things he describes enacted before my own eyes over the last twenty years in Exclusivism. I listed over twenty specific points to which Schnell refers that I had also experienced or seen in recent times. The most important of these were, firstly, that personal responsibility before God tends to be replaced with authoritarian thinking from the top down. Secondly, uniformity and conformity of behaviour are all-important, on the line of, 'this is my rule in all the churches' (1 Cor. 7:17). Thirdly, while Exclusivism teaches autonomy of the local assemblies, it practises centralised control from a 'universal lead'. Fourthly, they believe, like Jehovah's Witnesses, that they are God's chosen people on earth, and say, 'We are *the* Church'. Lastly, because of their views on 'separation', there exists a clannishness and intolerance towards other believers, and they refer frequently to those 'inside' and 'outside' of their 'fellowship'.

On the 'inside' and 'outside' question, my earliest recollection of this distinction was in 1939 when the question of 'mixed marriages' came up as a test of fellowship. Up till that time, a person could marry someone 'outside' without being put out of fellowship, although it was actively discouraged and very definitely frowned upon. A very important conference was held in Sydney in that year at which J. Taylor-Snr. laid down that a person 'inside' could not marry a person 'outside' even if the latter gave evidence of being a truly regenerate believer. The main scripture used was 'let them marry whom they wish, only in the Lord' (1 Cor. 7:39) and other scriptures such as the daughters of Zelophehad only marrying within their tribe (Num. 36) and the idea of 'wholly a pure seed' (Jer. 2:21) were used to support the stand taken. The expression 'in the Lord' would mean, as I understand it, that persons have fully recognised the Lordship of Christ over their lives practically and have submitted their wills to his Word, but Exclusivism takes it to mean, 'let them marry whom they wish, *only in our fellowship*'.

You have mentioned those who are put out. What happens to an Exclusive, mentally and spiritually, when this happens?

It is hard to answer that in general terms, because individuals vary so much. A few, particularly hard-core adherents of the older age group, try to get back and some of them are let back provided it is approved by the 'universal lead'. The requirement is 'one hundred per cent repentance' and this includes going back over one's whole history and coming up with satisfactory answers. Most of the older people just seem to fade away and deteriorate mentally, physically and spiritually in the despair of ever making the grade to get back. Very few link with other churches. In the middle-aged group, some try to go back, it depends on who you are and whether you are likely to toe the line in future, but some seem able to make a fresh start elsewhere provided they find a good church

atmosphere. A number of ex-Exclusives that I know of in different countries are making quite a valuable contribution in their churches, particularly those who have linked with Baptists and Open Brethren.

The young people are different. Few are really established in the truth or knowledge of Christ, and are exasperated with the spiritual hypocrisy and double standard of what they have been brought up in. Often they just want to have a fling or else live a normal life.

The main weapon in the armoury of Exclusivism is a big build-up of how terrible it is to be 'out of fellowship'. For so long now there has been a constant drum-beating on this subject to instill feelings of fear, rejection, worthlessness, doubt of salvation, guilt and so on. Any believer who has the Spirit and who prayerfully considers the Word of God will find that church discipline is to be exercised upon *wicked and unrepentant* people, and it should be clear what really constitutes wickedness.[7] Exclusivism claims that a church judgment for discipline is 'ratified in heaven'. And so it is if on just grounds but they 'withdraw from' people for such things as 'despising the assembly', 'speaking against the Lord's servant', 'self-will', 'rival ministry', 'being in an unclean association' (house, business, trade-union or whatever), 'worldliness'—the list of trivialities is almost endless!

Is there any hope for the movement?

The main trouble is that Exclusivism thinks it has it all. It has need of nothing. It is completely self-contained and self-sufficient. There might be some hope for the younger generation, but the danger is they will rebel against established religious order without anything of Christ in their souls to take its place.

As far as older persons and those in the lead are concerned experience from the past would seem to indicate that things will continue much as before, with the exercise of greater and harsher control as time goes on. There was enough filth and blasphemy thrown up at Aberdeen in 1970[8] to show the thing as it is, but it appears more was yet to come. At a recent gathering in U.K. the 'man of God' used language which comes from unregenerate, carnal worldings, one of many indications of a worsening situation. The type of leadership is unlikely to change.

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[5] *Thirty Years a Watchtower Slave*, W. J. Schnell, Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1957.
[6] *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life*, chapter 14, W. T. Bible and Trust Society of Pennsylvania, Copyright 1968.
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The formation of elderships is very much in vogue. Like marriage the bond of eldership can be for better, much better—or worse, much worse! Weighty issues are at stake in the recognition of elders for it would seem that once embarked upon there is no retreat from eldership. As one brother put it, 'you can't unscramble eggs!' But is that true? Some church constitutions include a clause to the effect that an elder can only continue in office for as long as he clearly fulfils that function. Roy Joslin, a pastor in South London, is one of several elders who has written on this subject. Here he comments on just one advantage of the eldership. Using a variety of old and contemporary source materials the editor is preparing a series of articles on the eldership as follows: (1) *eldership as presented in the New Testament,* (2) *the function of,* (3) *qualifications for,* (4) *how recognised and ordained,* (5) *the authority of etc.*

The eldership and continuity of teaching

THE PATTERN OF PASTORAL MINISTRY AMONG LOCAL CHURCHES OF THE New Testament age was very different from the contemporary pattern of ministry. Today, men in full-time pastoral ministry may expect to serve a number of pastorates of varying duration throughout their ministerial career. Also, it is unlikely that these men will serve as pastors in those churches in which they received their earlier Christian upbringing and training during the formative years prior to full-time service. Consequently, most pastors today are 'imported' into a local situation; they are not indigenous to the local church and community. In New Testament days the norm was otherwise. It was usual for New Testament pastors to serve within the local churches in which their growth and training had been gained and observed. The present imported pastor system has as one of its defects an almost inevitable lack of continuity of teaching. Between the going of one pastor and the coming of the next, the church will be without its own qualified and recognised teacher. During the inter-regnum deacons do their best to maintain the teaching of the church by a careful choice of pulpit supplies and perhaps, on occasions, by taking some part in pulpit ministry themselves. These efforts, though commendable, present a pattern which is less than biblical. Where a local church has an eldership, the responsibility for continuity of teaching rests with a number of men and not with one individual pastor. Although Timothy was 'imported' into a New Testament pastoral situation, it is clear that the apostle Paul wanted this young pastor to make proper provision for continuity of teaching. Paul instructs Timothy, '. . . what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also' (2 Tim. 2:2). A plurality of elders within a local church is the biblical pattern for preserving continuity of teaching. This spiritual objective should be our goal whether or not we continue to seek 'imported' full-time pastors.

Publishing News

CAREY PUBLICATIONS REPORT THAT Peter Lewis' book, *The Genius of Puritanism* is selling steadily. The help derived from the third part of the book dealing with the experience of desertion is reflected in the following letter:

'I can only thank God for the book *The Genius of Puritanism* by Peter Lewis which has been a true blessing to me. For some years, as a Christian, my faith in Christ has been severely tried by a sinful, melancholic condition, which prevailed, only to keep me for a long time in the slough of despond. Slowly with the guidance of the Puritan approach to Scripture, I have come to an understanding of my problem of depression. This book must be recommended to any Christian reader who suffers from depression and must be, surely, a most valuable handbook for pastoral counselling.'

To appear shortly is a second revised, and in some places rewritten edition of *An Introduction to the Baptists* by the editor. The blurb that has been prepared for the cover expresses the thrust of the volume:

The apostles can be said to have been Baptists, inasmuch as it was their practice to baptise believers, and none but believers, upon profession of repentance and faith. Thus they laid down the principle of the gathered church consisting of those called out and baptised.

With the development through the centuries of a monolithic, sacral Church, this Baptist principle was smothered. Nevertheless, there were not a few voices crying in the wilderness, contending for the gathered-church principle.

Following the Reformation, the Baptists emerged with a new strength and clarity. Those of the Particular Baptist stream borrowed all that was best from the Reformers and Puritans, but rejected their view of the Church.

The story of the Baptists is the theme of this book: their heroes, their development, their beliefs, their strengths, their weaknesses and their future potential. The Gospel, the gathered church principle, the Reformed doctrines—these, in the author's view, combine to form the most dynamic and supremely relevant subject for the whole wide world today.

Published in America is a quarterly magazine, *Baptist Reformation Review*. This excellent paper does not hesitate to carry articles of extended length, and sometimes contains as much as eighty pages. In several ways the magazine is complementary to *Reformation Today*. Norbert Ward is the editor, and Jon Zens and Stuart Ogilvie are associate editors. Subscription rates are: one year £2.00, two years £3.50, three years £5.00, five years, £7.00. Postage is included in the subscription price. The U.K. Agent is:

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Aberystwyth,
Dyfed SY23 1LL, Wales.

NEWS FROM BARUCH MAOZ IN ISRAEL tells of the gradual advance in influence of the Reformation Journal in Hebrew of which he is the editor. *Reformation Today* has been honoured inasmuch as the article on the Cainites and their Civilisation by Donald MacLeod and the exposition on the Song of Solomon in the series on Christian Experience have been chosen for translation. Brother Maoz requests that he be informed early should any who have a valuable contribution to make plan to visit Israel in view of the fact that a Theological Study Group has been established. One of the subjects so far handled is 'The Implications of the Deity of Christ in the Doctrine of Salvation'. The address: P.O.B. 75, Rishon LeTsion, Israel.

Bristol, 1977

	9.30 a.m.	11.30 a.m.	4.30 p.m.	7.45 p.m.
TUESDAY 4TH JANUARY	Theme: The local church		The legacy of the 19th century *Robert Oliver*	The glory of the local church *Erroll Hulse*
WEDNESDAY 5TH JANUARY	Worship as a total response *Herbert Carson*	The implications of baptism for the local church *Erroll Hulse*	Music Discussion	The local church and Sunday *Geoff Thomas*
THURSDAY 6TH JANUARY	Koinonia implications of *Colin Richards*	The Lord's Supper implications of *Dic Eccles*	This period devoted to intercession	*Herbert Carson*

The public are invited to the evening meetings. See front inside cover for details.

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